

# NHS Highland



**Meeting:** NHS Highland Board  
**Meeting date:** 25 January 2022  
**Title:** Director of Public Health Annual Report  
**Responsible Executive/Non-Executive:** Tim Allison, Director of Public Health & Policy  
**Report Author:** Tim Allison, Director of Public Health & Policy

## 1 Purpose

**This is presented to the Board for:**

- Awareness and Discussion

**This report relates to a:**

- Legal requirement
- Government strategy

**This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):**

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

**This report relates to the following Corporate Objective(s)**

<p><b>Clinical and Care Excellence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving health</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partners in Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in partnership</li> <li>• Listening and responding</li> <li>• Communicating well</li> </ul>	
<p><b>A Great Place to Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being inclusive</li> <li>• Improving wellbeing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safe and Sustainable</b></p>	
<p>Other (please explain below)</p>		

## 2 Report summary

### 2.1 Situation

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for 2021 is presented.

### 2.2 Background

Directors of Public Health are required to produce an annual report on the health of the population. Mental health has been a focus in several recent reports including alcohol in 2015, loneliness in the 2016 report, and a detailed discussion of adverse childhood experiences in the 2018 report. This report highlights the issues of mental health and suicide in the NHS Highland area. COVID related demands on the Public Health team have meant that the report has less detail than normal and further work will be undertaken in the course of 2022/23.

### 2.3 Assessment

The NHS Highland area has a consistently higher rate of deaths by suicide than the Scottish average. Rates are highest in the most deprived areas, but at each level of deprivation, death rates are higher than the Scottish average. Death rates are statistically significantly high in the Highland Council area. Responses to suicide include the need to address wider social inequalities and the lifetime impact of trauma, and to make responses from both public services and employers to stress, distress and mental illness as effective as possible. Community awareness of mental wellbeing and stigma, and working with community partnerships to increase support and resilience are important.

### 2.4 Proposed level of Assurance

This report proposes the following level of assurance:

Substantial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 3 Impact Analysis

### 3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

Assuring a high quality of care to people experiencing distress, and with mental illness, is an important component of the response to these findings.

### 3.2 Workforce

It is important that all staff are able to promote wellbeing and to respond appropriately to stress and distress.

### 3.3 Financial

There are no immediate financial implications of the report.

### **3.4 Risk Assessment/Management**

Risks are managed in line with NHS Highlands policy.

### **3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities**

The report highlights social inequalities in health as a first step to their reduction.

### **3.6 Other impacts**

There are no other specific impacts to note.

### **3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation**

This is an independent report from the Director of Public Health.

### **3.8 Route to the Meeting**

This is an independent report from the Director of Public Health.

## **4 Recommendation**

The Board is asked to note the 2021 Director of Public Health Annual Report.

### **4.1 List of appendices**

The following appendices are included with this report:

- The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2021